

Safeguarding minors during media interviews

Safeguarding minors during media interviews is a crucial aspect of ensuring the well-being and safety of young athletes. Interviews are often conducted for various reasons, such as player recruitment, media engagement, or assessments of athlete development. However, it's essential to conduct these interviews in a manner that prioritizes the protection and dignity of the minors involved. Here are some key considerations for safeguarding minors in sports interviews:

1. **Informed Consent:** Before conducting interviews with minors, it's important to obtain informed consent from both the child and their parent or legal guardian. They should fully understand the purpose, potential consequences, and what to expect during the interview. Consent should be voluntary and not coerced.
2. **Privacy and Confidentiality:** Interviews should be conducted in a private and secure setting to protect the minor's privacy. Additionally, all information shared during the interview must be treated with strict confidentiality, with exceptions only in cases of safety concerns or legal obligations.
3. **Age-Appropriate Language:** Interviewers should use age-appropriate language and explanations to ensure that minors fully understand the questions and can provide informed responses. Avoid technical jargon and complex terminology.
4. **Supportive Environment:** Minors should have a supportive adult present during the interview if they desire it, such as a parent, guardian, or coach. This can help the child feel more comfortable and secure during the process.
5. **Child-Focused Interviews:** The interview should be centered around the needs and comfort of the child. It is essential to create an environment in which the minor feels safe, respected, and not pressured to disclose information.
6. **Non-Intrusive Questions:** Interviewers should use open-ended questions that allow minors to share information voluntarily, rather than leading or suggestive questions. Avoid prying or intrusive questioning, which could cause distress.
7. **Monitoring and Oversight:** Sports organizations should have oversight and monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure that interviews are conducted appropriately. This can include supervisors or designated child safeguarding officers who oversee the process.
8. **Child Safeguarding Training:** Interviewers, including coaches, administrators, and media personnel, should undergo child safeguarding training to better understand how to conduct interviews with minors safely and ethically.
9. **Identification and Reporting of Concerns:** Interviewers should be trained to recognize signs of abuse or discomfort during the interview. If any concerns arise, they must be reported promptly to the appropriate authorities or child protection agencies.
10. **Recording Interviews:** When necessary, interviews with minors should be recorded with the minor's consent, ensuring transparency and accuracy. This recording can serve as a reference in case of disputes or allegations.

11. No Retaliation: Minors should be assured that they will not face any repercussions for reporting concerns or disclosing information during interviews. Anti-retaliation policies should be in place.

Safeguarding minors in sports interviews is not only a moral obligation but also a legal requirement in many jurisdictions. Violating these principles can lead to severe legal consequences and harm the well-being of young athletes. Creating a safe and respectful environment for interviews is essential in supporting the overall development of minors and ensuring that their experiences in sports are positive and empowering.